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SENATE RESOLUTION 136  
By Dixon

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Kemmons Wilson for his  
laudable accomplishments.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to  
specially recognize those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished  
themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Kemmons Wilson, the founder of the Holiday Inn, the Wilson World Hotel,  
and the Wilson Inn, is most assuredly one such citizen who is richly deserving of this body's  
praise; and

WHEREAS, while on vacation with his family in 1951, Kemmons Wilson was dissatisfied  
with the prices and quality of lodging available for his family; a visionary man, he realized there  
was an unfulfilled need in the travel industry and sought to fill that void, building his first Holiday  
Inn in 1952 on Summer Avenue, one of the main approach roads in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, an astute businessman and leader, Kemmons Wilson's one Holiday Inn has  
grown into an international business which has revolutionized family travel accommodations  
around the globe; and

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WHEREAS, after his retirement as Chairman of the Board of Holiday Inn in 1979, Kemmons Wilson began his second career in the hospitality industry, developing the Orange Lake Country Club in Kissimmee, Florida; located just four miles from Disney World, it is one of the largest and most successful time-shared resorts in the country; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Kemmons Wilson began development of the first Wilson World Hotel, which is ideally located one mile from Disney World; since the grand opening, six more Wilson World Hotels have opened primarily in the Southeastern United States; and

WHEREAS, Kemmons Wilson established the first Wilson Inn in his hometown of Memphis in 1988 and has since expanded to include eleven more inns; reminiscent of the Holiday Inn beginnings, the Wilson Inn is a new concept in lodging; and

WHEREAS, encouraged by his sons and, at the age of eighty-four, Kemmons Wilson wrote his autobiography entitled *Half Luck and Half Brains* which was released in October of 1996; and

WHEREAS, a highly respected member of the international business community, Kemmons Wilson has received numerous awards and honors including, the Golden Plate Award from the American Academy of Achievement in 1965, the National Image Award from the Real Estate Board of Memphis in 1966, the Master of Free Enterprise Achievement Award for Junior Achievement in 1968, the Horatio Alger Award from the Horatio Alger Association in 1970, the Businessman of the Year from the Religious Heritage of America in 1970, the National Human Relations Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1972, the Entrepreneur Award from the International Franchise Association in 1982, the International Achievement Award from the World Trade Club of San Francisco in 1984, the International Executive of the Year from Sales and Marketing Executives International in 1985, Outstanding Business Leader Award from Northwood Institute in 1985, the Outstanding Citizen Award from the Memphis Civitan Club of Civitan International in 1992, the Cook Halle Award from Carnival Memphis in 1992, the Lifetime Achievement Award from UCLA Extension's Hotel Industry

Investment Conference in 1997, the America's Free Enterprise Living Legend Award from Students in Free Enterprise in 1997, the Lifetime Achievement Award from Pennsylvania State University in 1998, the Academy of Achievement from Sales and Marketing Executives International in 1999, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Memphis Area Home Builders Association in 2001, and the Man of the Year Award from the Memphis AL Chymia Shriners in 2001; and

WHEREAS, Kemmons Wilson was inducted into the Hall of Fame by the *American Motel Magazine* in 1961, the Hospitality Magazine in 1961, the American Society of Travel Agents in 1975, and the International Franchise Association in 1989; he was also inducted into the National Business Hall of Fame for Fortune Magazine/Junior Achievement in 1982, the Memphis Business Hall of Fame for the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce in 1984, the Hall of Leaders for the Travel Industry Association in 1991, the Entrepreneurial Hall of Honor for the Pink Palace Museum in 1992, the Hospitality Industry Hall of Honor for the University of Houston in 1996, the Building Industry of Tennessee Hall of Fame for the Home Builders Association of Tennessee in 1997, and Hospitality Hall of Fame for Pennsylvania State University in 1998; and

WHEREAS, Kemmons Wilson was named by London's *Sunday Times Magazine* as one of the "*thousand makers of the twentieth century*" and *Time* magazine said in a cover story honoring him that, "he has transformed the motel from the old wayside fleabag into the most popular home away from home"; and

WHEREAS, although he did not complete high school and never had the opportunity to attend college, this remarkable man is the recipient of several honorary degrees: the University of Alabama Doctor of Laws in 1968, the Rhodes College Doctor of Business Administration in 1972, the Northwood Institute Doctor of Laws in 1973, the William Woods College Doctor of Humanities in 1978, and the Christian Brothers University Doctor of Humanities in 1979; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Kemmons Wilson announced his intention to build the Wilson School of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Memphis; with the value of the building being approximately \$15 million, this generous donation will be the largest single gift by a donor to the University of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, a vital member of the Memphis community, Kemmons Wilson has served as President of the Memphis Area Home Builders Association and other community organizations, including; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Kemmons Wilson was fortunate to share love and companionship with his late wife, Dorothy, who was named American Mother of the Year in 1972; the marriage produced five children, fourteen grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Kemmons Wilson epitomizes the spirit and commitment of a true Tennessean; through his ingenuity, dedication, and hard work, he has distinguished himself as a leader in the hotel industry; and

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of this legislative body to honor Kemmons Wilson for his remarkable accomplishments in business and his generosity to the citizens of this State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor Kemmons Wilson, founder of the Holiday Inn, the Wilson World Hotel, and the Wilson Inn, recognize his significant contributions to the hospitality industry, applaud his extraordinary philanthropy, commend his steadfast commitment to his family and community, and extend to him our best wishes for continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.